

The committee met yesterday; Mr. Scholefield in the chair.

The examination of Mr. Redwood, professor of chemistry to the Pharmaceutical Society, was continued.—The Witness proceeded, as on the former occasion, to draw a distinction between what were termed adulterations and what were only impurities—as in the case of nitrate of potash, Epsom salts, &c. Carbonate of soda, so called, but really bicarbonate of soda, was never adulterated. He had obtained 40 samples, all of which were pure. Dr. Normandy had certainly sent him a sample of bicarbonate of soda which contained 12 per cent. of sulphate of soda, and which ought not to be used in medicine. The samples referred to were purchased by two of his assistants in various localities, and he handed in a list of the shops of the vendors. As regarded calomel, it had been stated that it was frequently adulterated to the extent of 60 per cent. with carbonate of lime or sulphate of barytes. He contended that as met with in commerce it was in a great state of purity. He had obtained 51 samples of calomel, none of which were adulterated. One contained a little oxide of iron, and in two others there was a trace of oxide, which could not be called an adulteration, because its presence arose from a defect in the process of manufacture. With these exceptions, the samples were in a state of purity. The English calomel was celebrated all over the world. It had been stated that iodine was adulterated with water and black lead; but it could not be adulterated with those substances. He thought that no one would venture to say that the retail dealers in drugs and medicines were the adulterators, because they were a highly-respectable body, and their position placed them above all suspicion. They were the men to check and expose adulterations.

By Lord Goderich.—Admitted that there was a considerable amount of adulteration took place at the drug mills of the drug grinders. There was there an introduction of inert matter in the shape of sawdust. This article was used largely to cleanse the pugging mills, and a portion was left in them sometimes to make up the weight. There could be no doubt that in many cases wholesale druggists must be aware of the introduction of such matter. The dealers would sell the article with the admixture of sawdust at the same price as they obtained for the pure article.

By Mr. Swift.—The adulteration was made at the desire of the wholesale druggists.

By Lord Goderich.—He acquitted the retail dealer of adulterating, and divided the adulterations made between the wholesale dealers and the drug grinders.

By Mr. Villiers.—He thought that medical men greatly exaggerated the evil by the habit of cautioning their patients to take care where they bought their medicines. None of the articles sold at Apothecaries Hall were any better than those which could be obtained elsewhere. He had no doubt that with reference to cod liver oil medical men would recommend patients to go to a particular establishment to purchase it, because they had confidence in certain persons, though they had no evidence that others adulterated it. It had not fallen within his knowledge that cod liver oil was adulterated. He believed it was adulterated, but not extensively.

By the Chairman.—Did not believe that sarsaparilla was adulterated.

By Lord Goderich.—Believed that there was some foundation for the assertion that there was one wholesale drug dealer who would sell any powdered drug at 36s. per cwt., whatever the market price might be. Magnesia was never adulterated; it contained generally a little lime, which was the result of a defect in the process of manufacture.

Witness here said that he freely admitted the existence of adulteration of drugs to some considerable extent.

By Mr. Villiers.—He considered that there were two classes of adulterations—the one being fraudulent, and the other what might be termed conventional frauds. In the latter class he meant those cases in which the sanction of the consumer was given, directly or indirectly, to the practice. Fraudulent adulterations by the druggists were of very rare occurrence, and when they did, they were of short continuance, because, when they were detected, they were put a stop to. He believed that during the last fourteen years, since the exertions of the Pharmaceutical Society, all those cases had been brought to light, and the statement of them in the journal of that society had contributed to their exposure. Thought that Dr. Thomson was much deceived, and was not acquainted with the facts of the case. The witness here detailed a few cases of adulteration which had been detected by the Pharmaceutical Society some years since in morphia and isinglass. The cases cited by Dr. Hassall of adulterated samples of this article went only to cases where the finest gelatine was substituted for isinglass. Borax and lard he had known adulterated, especially the latter article, which came from North America adulterated. Scamony was adulterated. Believed that opium was never adulterated. Dr. Thomson had alluded to Indian opium, but it was not an article of commerce. Noxious adulterations might be conventional adulterations, as in the case of bole armenian for anchovies, and of copper in making pickles; these adulterations were made at the wish of the consumers, and to suit the public taste. Much had been said as to articles used in the manufacture of gin, such as oil of vitriol, oil of almonds, salt of tartar, and alum; but they were used by the dealers in gin as isinglass was used by the brewers. He begged to state that in the manufacture of gin it was a certain fact that juniper berries and coriander seed were always used. Gin, in point of fact, was a pure flavoured spirit and unexceptionable in its quality. It was the purest spirit that could be produced in this country.

By Mr. Kinnaid.—Coculus Indicus he did not believe was much used in adulterating gin.

By Mr. Moffatt.—Gin contained nothing prejudicial to the public health. Beer was much more largely adulterated than gin.

By Mr. Swift.—Believed that the general practice was to use oil of almonds and oil of vitriol. Sixty drops of oil of vitriol and sixty drops of oil of almonds were put into a mortar, and mixed in half a pint of strong mixture, and these were added to one hundred gallons of gin, being in the proportion of one drop of oil of vitriol to each gallon of gin. The object was to produce a particular character on the beading.

By Lord Ebrington.—The proportion of the mixture was one drop to seventy thousand.

By Mr. Kinnaid.—The publicans generally purchased the article for making the beading.

In answer to a question from Mr. Moffatt, the witness stated that the Pharmaceutical Society was instituted some years ago with a view to improve the practice of pharmacy in England. That society now included about 3000 members.

Mr. Villiers requested Dr. Normandy to take the witness's chair, and that gentleman proceeded to detail the circumstances under which he had procured and analysed specimens of carbonate of soda which were adulterated. He did so in consequence of the strong opinion given by Mr. Redwood that it never was adulterated.

The committee then adjourned till this day, at half-past twelve o'clock.